

How & Why to Commission A New Work for Your Ensemble!

*a S.H.O.P. Talk - presented by Mark Wolfram at the 2017 Midwest Clinic
December 22, 2017 @ 8:30am • Meeting Room W180*

Introduction

- Why it's a good idea to commission a new work – the benefits for all concerned

What are the desired objectives and how can they best be accomplished?

- Research
- Develop & Execute a Plan to Create & Present your New Piece

Reasons to Commission a New Piece for Your Ensemble:

- Stand Out from the Crowd / Bragging Rights
- Repertoire Development
- Category of piece:
 - A Fanfare to Celebrate An Event
 - A Favorite Text or Spiritual Quotation Set to Music
 - A Perennial Piece (Holidays / Seasons)
 - A Special Event: Retirement, Anniversary, Musical Tour, a Special Performance
 - The Dedication of a New Performance / Teaching Facility
 - To Honor a Teacher, Mentor, Friend or Other Special Person
 - A Recruiting Tool for Your Program – Feature Faculty as Soloist(s)

Selecting a composer: Why should he/she compose your new piece?

- Composer's Background / Training
- Composer's Previous Works / Style(s)
- Composer's Popularity / Fame / Reputation
- Additional Composer Intangibles: Speed, Desire, Cost, Special Skills, Personal Associations

Developing a timeline for the project:

- Envision the Piece That You Want Created For You
- Get Approval from School Administration / Governing Board, etc.
- Open Early Talks With Desired Composer
- Determine Overall Schedule
- Research & Secure Funding for Project
- Negotiate Final Costs, Receipt Dates and Sign Agreement With Composer
- Plan / Prepare Concert Promotional Materials: Press Releases, Posters, Programs, Tickets

Strategies for funding the commission and performance(s):

- Special Awards from School Board, City / County / State Arts Organizations
- Grants (such as NEA, CBDNA, NBA, ABA, NewMusicUSA, American Composers Forum)
- Basic Fundraising: Sell Candy, Bake Sale, Car Wash, Concert Ticket Receipts, CD Sales, Online Downloads of Premiere, Raffle, Crowd-Source Funding, etc.
- Individual Donor(s), Band Booster Club, Angel Donor, or even Fund it Yourself!
- Commissioning Consortiums

Optimizing the impact of the premiere via promotion and publicity:

- Guest Soloists / Conductors (Celebrity / Mayor to conduct)
- Local Media (Newspapers, AM TV Shows, Radio Interviews)
- Internet (Online Calendar / Blog, Websites, Email Blasts)
- Short YouTube.com Video Clips of Rehearsals (edit them!)
- Ads on Billboards, Bus Benches, School Marquee, etc.
- Social Media: Get The Word Out!

more... (over)

How & Why to Commission A New Work for Your Ensemble! (page 2)

Business Considerations:

- Ownership of Copyright
- Licensing – Performance / Recording
- Contracts / Agreements:
 - the basics: who (you / your organization)
 - what (create new work)
 - when (concert date)
 - where (performance venue address)
 - how much (deposit / balance-terms), delivery date(s), dedications, special provisions

Cross-Pollination: Involving Other Groups and Individuals

- Commissioning Consortiums:
 - Sharing the Financial Burden
 - Multiple Premieres
 - Create a Publicity Groundswell
- New Versions (Orchestras, Bands, Brass Bands, Small Ensembles)
- Program Notes by Local Music Reviewer(s)

Sweetening the Pot: Additional Ways Composer Can Contribute to Your Program

- Skype / FaceTime During Rehearsals
- Master Classes (composition, conducting, music business)
- Private Lessons (composition, conducting)
- Local Radio / TV Interviews to Promote the Premiere Concert
- Pre-Concert Talk to Audience Regarding the Creation of the New Work

Conclusions:

- Imagine a New Piece
- Make a Plan to Create & Perform It
- Follow Through with Determination
- Enjoy the Benefits for Your Group and Career
- Repeat

=====

Contact: Mark Wolfram

Telephone: (520) 820-3209

Email: mark@markwolfram.com

Online Outline:

http://www.markwolfram.com/SHOP_Talk_Outline.pdf

=====

Check out Mark Wolfram's Catalog of Concert Band & Orchestral Works
at Sound Studio Publications (<http://www.soundstudiopublications.com>)